



BRINGING WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH THE IMPACT OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Women play an important role in the development of a family and society. Women are not only managing their families but also playing an important role in the development of entire society. Making women aware of their rights and developing confidence in them is a central issue. Women empowerment is one of the biggest tools for 'effective development' of any country. It means freedom of women from the vicious circle of social, political, economic and gender-based discrimination. It is essential for them to be skilled in order to be able to better serve their families at home as well as professional field. Skill development not only creates employment opportunities but also empowers them. The aim of skill development, in case of women, is not just simply preparing them for jobs; but also, to boost their performance by improving the quality of work in which they are involved. Currently, a majority of the female workforce in India is unskilled. They can be motivated to develop their life skills that will give them high paying jobs with better livelihood & confidence to earn for their family. It will develop their ability & quality to move ahead and be self-dependent. This paper highlights the impact of skill development on bringing women empowerment. The basic need for empowering women is to instil the required skills and abilities in order to shape up their overall personality & raise their status within the society.

KEYWORDS: Women Empowerment, Skill Development, Inclusive Growth.

INTRODUCTION

We live in a society where some inequalities have been popular for so long. It comprises the difference between men and women. From early times, men are considered the superior and the leading member and decision-maker of the society, family. Whereas women are only provided with the responsibilities of handling the household work, taking care of the children, and always staying at home. In the early times, the gender of the person played an important role in society for performing functions. Women are considered neglecting ones from society and have never been involved in any decision-making tasks. Their opinion doesn't matter to anyone. They have to do things and tasks that they have been given to do only.

After so long, this practice has ended by the initiatives of starting the Women Empowerment, by which each and every woman has provided their right to make decisions accordingly and authority to live their life on their own. The main motive of Women Empowerment is to give them the power to stand equally with Men. It means there are no inequalities with respect to gender, and they live their lives according to their own will. To lead them, take their steps with their abilities, and live freely in society. In the early times, women didn't have the authority to work or even stop their education after a certain age.

Women Empowerment helps all the female category like a revolution that makes them live freely in the society without any gender inequalities. Power to take decisions of their life and authority to make changes and opportunities to live and compete men in the field of success and stand with them. Every human has to boost the confidence and courage of women and realize that they are capable of making decisions in every phase of life, and they can do better as like or even better than men in society.

Women Empowerment- It's Meaning

Women Empowerment means giving them freedom or power to live the way they want. It allows them to identify their skills, knowledge & abilities to make their own decisions. It is a dynamic & growth process for women which includes awareness, attainment & actualization of skills. For the socio-economic development of any society, women empowerment is essential. It is important for women to identify themselves with self-confidence & esteem. The main aspect of empowerment is to give a sense of internal strength to them - to control their lives. The confident smile on the faces of women is the measurement of their empowerment.

Women Empowerment is not just a word or a phrase or any slogan for society. It is a change that we have to make in society and in the mindset of every person who thinks that women are less able than those men in every field in society. In both biological and moral contexts, the women are somehow more capable of taking responsibilities to give birth to their babies and to give the shape of their own and family's future and development. They are also capable of maintaining peace in society as well. It is necessary and very important to give equal opportunity to every woman to prove themselves and grow in life and be strong as an individual by making their own choices in life.

Women Empowerment in India

The Indian Constitution not only guarantees women's equality but also gives the State the authority to implement policies that positively discriminate against women in order to improve their standard of living. Our laws, development strategies, plans, and programmes have all been created within the context of a democratic polity with the goal of advancing women in a variety of fields. The focus on women's issues began to noticeably

change from welfare to development starting with the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974–1978), and from the Eighth Five Year Plan on, the emphasis shifted from development to empowerment. The Government of India (GoI) adopted the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001), which aims to promote the advancement, development, and empowerment of women, and proclaimed 2001 as the Year of Women's Empowerment (Swashakti).

The National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) was launched by the Govt. of India with the aim to strengthen generally processes that promote all-round development of women. It has the mandate to strengthen the inter-sector convergence; facilitate the process of coordinating all the women's welfare and socio-economic development programmes across ministries and departments. One of the key strategies of NMEW is - investment in skill and entrepreneurship development, microcredit, vocational training and SHG development for economic empowerment of women. This effectively illustrates the fact that teaching women to read and write would not be enough; they also need occupational training or skills in order to be independent and support their families financially. In recent years, women have shown a rising interest in jobs that pay well, self-employment, and entrepreneurship—activities that also advance property rights, political representation, social equality, individual liberties, family development, market development, community development, and ultimately, national development.

Skill Development- It's Meaning

Skill development is a key to success which improves productivity, employability and earning opportunities. It is the bridge between job and workforce. Today, it is considered as an important and indispensable tool for women empowerment. Indian women face the majority of barriers to accessing skills and productive employment. A large effort is needed to create a skilled workforce for creating an economic prosperity. The aim of skill development, in case of women, is not just simply preparing them for jobs; but also, to boost their performance by improving the quality of work in which they are involved. Looking at the importance of the role women play in the development of a nation; one can sense that there is a long way to go in that direction.

Investing in women's skill development is one of the most crucial and effective means to drive progress on poverty eradication, gender equality, and inclusive economic growth. A huge base of women is eager to learn new skills and empower themselves. With the right kind of training and encouragement, women can be truly empowered through skill development.

NEP 2020 and Women Empowerment

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisages equitable and inclusive education for all, with special focus on children and youth, especially girls, from socially and economically disadvantaged groups. The policy's focus is important because despite effort to educate women, the dropout rate for girls is still high after secondary education. The enrolment ratio too dips at the secondary and higher secondary levels. Among many reasons, the onset of menstruation and the lack of availability of hygienic toilets are responsible for girls leaving school without completing education. The NEP 2020 intends to meet this challenge through its Gender Inclusion Fund (GIF). The fund will be used to provide quality education to all students. Hopefully, it will also be used to ensure facilities like secured and hygienic toilets would definitely be a part of GIF's infrastructural checklist. Besides toilets, hostel facilities for girl

students have been recommended by NEP. This would be welcome in those areas where students have to travel long distances to reach school. NEP 2020 appears to have recognised the fact that female students are disadvantaged in additional ways and so in the four Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) that have been identified within this policy, females form at least half of each of these groups.

Skill Development for Women

Women have shown their ability in community development. Hence, it is important that women be a part of skill development. In India, women are now participating in various areas like – education, art and culture, service sector, sports, politics, media, and science and technology. They form a substantial part of the workforce - but the working percentage rate of women in the total labour force is declining. A large number of them are working in the informal sectors. This represents lack of employment opportunities and skills for women workforce. Currently, a majority of the female workforce in India is unskilled. They can be motivated to develop their life skills – that will give them high paying jobs with better livelihood & confidence to earn for their family. It will develop their ability & quality to move ahead and be self-dependent. It is observed, that the concept of training and skill development needs to move beyond imparting technical and managerial skills, with more focus on literacy, numeracy, political & life skills.

There are a few steps that are being embraced to bring about successful women empowerment:

Self-employment through skill acquisition

Various training programs are being introduced to enhance livelihood opportunities of underprivileged women who have scant exposure to knowledge and skills.

Additional training equipment

To enhance access to skill development, appropriate facilities are being constituted like setting up additional training equipment, increasing the pool of women trainers, etc.

Requirement for special delivery mechanisms

In order to bridge the gap, there is a requirement for special delivery mechanisms like mobile training units, flexible afternoon batches with local needs-based training. It should also focus on women-related issues like safe training environment, equity in remuneration and complaint redressal mechanism, employment of women trainers, etc.

ICT incorporation in skill development

The need to incorporate ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in skill development solutions has increased due to Covid-19 Pandemic. The focus on the promotion of internet or mobile-based platform which would connect skilled women and employers has become of utmost importance.

Besides, some skills that training institutes must impart to women empowerment are:

- Communication skills
- Language development
- Leadership skills
- Entrepreneurship skills
- Basic computer skills
- Business etiquettes
- Personality development
- Management skills
- Basic accounting skills

The government of India has passed the national policy for 'women empowerment' – which aims to ensure overall development of women within the country. They seek to impart

skills to women so that they can stand & support for themselves and gain status within society. On the other side, Maharashtra government has launched 'Skill Sakhi' for women empowerment. Their main aim is not only to create employment opportunities for women but also to empower them. They are giving skill training which involves tailoring, embroidery, knitting, and the making of home decoration items. The missions – 'Skill India' & 'Make in India' shall succeed only when the women work hand-in-hand.

Problems Still Faced by Women after Getting Proper Skills

- Even after proper training, it is not easy for them to get a job – due to following reasons:
- Too much competition for gender bias, family issues & long working hours
- Early marriages & traditional protocols, do not allow them to stand independently in their career path
- Even after getting a job, many women are paid less as compared to males
- Along with this, women safety is again continuous issue which pulls women back

Suggestions

India is the largest & fastest growing country, but the reality is that it still lags behind as compared to other in terms of accessibility of skills to women. Suggestions to improve the situation are:

- There is a need to improve policies for women by creating more seats for them.
- Digital platforms can be used for women empowerment.
- Empowering them through skill-building programs would give them more opportunities to earn their living and become self-reliant.
- There is a need to develop training policies from gender perspectives with understanding of local traditions & customs.
- Expand training institutes in remote areas with employment opportunities for Sustainable Development.

CONCLUSION

Empowering women economically, socially, politically, educationally, and legally is essential for the country's socio-economic development. If given an opportunity, women are capable of managing everything. They must be treated with respect, dignity, and equal rights. All we need is a united effort concentrated in the right direction that would rest only with women's liberation. As the population of India increasingly moves towards the 'knowledge economy,' it becomes quite significant for it to focus on the advancement of the skills relevant to the emerging economic environment. Henceforth, an efficient skill development system is the need of the hour for empowering women.

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